RESTORATION REVIEW

THE NATURE OF MAN

I have discovered that men are always fascinated by the thought of Lucifer, perhaps because evil is always more dramatic than good, more spectacular, more bloody, and more frightful, and when men are not comedians—though they never seem aware of the comedy of their being—they are, at heart, dramatists and tragedians. Yet strangely, the tragedy of the Sacrifice on the Cross does not touch them greatly, and therein is another mystery.

—Taylor Caldwell in *Dialogues with the Devil*

IN THIS ISSUE:

THE FRAGMENTARY CHARACTER OF GOD'S REVELATION

ARE THERE MODES OF BAPTISM?

CRITICISM WHICH SAVES

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AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

Too many of us have neglected to lend a helping hand to the American Bible Society. Logic would demand that we of the Churches of Christ would be most enthusiastic about the work of this Society, for its sale purpose is to distribute the scriptures to all the world. We have diligently proclaimed that all men need to do is to "Take the Book" and learn the simple gospel. And the American Bible Society has been equally diligent in seeing to it that the Bibles they distribute are *without explanatory notes* just the text of the Bible itself.

It is doubtful that we really believe in the sufficiency of the Bible alone, for we go to all sorts of trouble to see to it that it is explained—as *we* see it. Hardly ever are we content simply to read the scriptures to an audience. We want one of our men there to interpret it. We have shown little interest in distributing the Bible itself, though our missionaries throughout the world are now numbered in the hundreds. It seems that we trust men to present our message more than the Bible itself.

It is easier to raise money among Churches of Christ to send one of our preachers to an African nation than it is to raise funds to ship Bibles to that nation, even when the Bible is in the language of that African nation.

It is just possible that we are fearful that people will not quite learn the truth if they simply read the Word of God. They need one of our men there to make sure they understand it the same way we do!

I will not dispute the fact that the Bible is a book that needs to be taught, while at the same time allowing that one *can* make his way through it without a teacher. I am only suggesting that we be more critical of some of the things we have been saying, such as the remark that "The way of truth is so simple that even a fool can understand it," which reminds me of another Old Testament passage that we have long misapplied, and such tripe as "Anyone can understand it if he'll just read the Bible for himself."

The fact is that many people read the Bible and come up with ideas different from our own. We do not let that end the matter"—A simple reading of the Bible" does not bring them around to our way of thinking—so we proceed to educate them in our own catechism of interpretation.

We may suppose this is all right. But we ought to quit talking about how simple "the truth" is and quit being amazed that everyone doesn't see the Bible the same way we do. The truth is that "the simple gospel" is not so simple after all, and that the Bible is a difficult book to understand.

Still I am in favor of the American Bible Society distributing the Word of God far and wide, *without notes* and in many translations. It is altogether possible that a heathen in Africa is just as well off with the Bible in his own language on the table before him as he is to have a Church of Christ missionary sitting at his side. We might not get Churches of Christ in Africa that way, but the heathen just might learn about Christ that way.

However this may be, the fact remains that our people have been less than enthusiastic about distributing the scriptures to the world. We have everything from seminaries to missionary societies, with one kind of a name or another, but nothing resembling a Bible-distributing society. That is a curious fact about a people who say so much about the sufficiency of the scriptures. Perhaps we are uneasy when people have the scriptures *only*, and we feel an urgency to be there to make sure they understand it correctly. Then do we really believe in the sufficiency of the scriptures? Do we not really believe that it takes the Bible *plus* the Church of Christ to save the world?

We can be thankful that the American Bible Society has not yielded to the demand for all sorts of denominational Bibles. The Society even offered to send hundreds of thousands of copies of a Roman Catholic translation of the scriptures if the hierarchy would agree to omitting the explanatory notes. The Roman church refused to delete the notes and the Bibles were not sent. Still others, such as the Southern Baptists and the Seventh-Day Adventists, would be fearful that they would never have any churches in foreign lands if *only* the Bible were sent.

So each denomination sends its own missionaries along with the Bible, and thus there are all sorts of churches as a result. Suppose that only Bibles were sent, without notes—fresh translations in the vernacular of the people, to be sure, but *only* the scriptures—how many denominations would arise as a result? And let’s be honest enough to ask how many Churches of Christ there would be if the uninitiated had only the Bible to read?

We may be a bit hypocritical along these lines, for it is doubtful that we believe in the Bible as much as we claim. To say the least we are not happy about the situation when the people have only the scriptures as a gift from the American Bible Society. We are willing to spend a lot of money and go to a lot of trouble to see to it that they have one of our preachers too. Then we can relax and our editors can add another nation that now has the gospel. With the Bible only it did not have enough, and apparently did not even have the gospel—not until one of our men got over there!

If we are willing to examine these rather curious notions of ours, we might decide to give the American Bible Society more assistance, which up to this point has been *nil.* Their address is 1865 Broadway, New York 10023.

Last year alone they distributed 70 million copies of the scriptures throughout the world. That is right, seventy million copies of the Word of God or portions thereof. Their most recent translation, *Good News for Modern Man,* which was issued only two years

ago, has already reached 12 million copies. It sells for only 35 cents, and it makes the scriptures as relevant as the morning newspaper.

Is this not worthy of our support, a Society that so profusely diffuses the very Book that tells about our religion and our church?

How about joining me in "Missing-a-Meal" and sending a donation to the American Bible Society?—*the Editor*

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The Quest of God . . .

THE FRAGMENTARY CHARACTER OF GOD'S REVELATION

It was in many parts and in many ways that God spoke to our fathers in the prophets in time gone past; but in the end of these days He has spoken to us in One who is a Son.—Hebrews 1

Jesus once explained to his disciples why it was necessary for God's revelation to be fragmentary: "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now" (John 16:12)

Man has never been able to bear all that God wanted him to know, so he has revealed himself "in many parts and in many ways" throughout history. It is evident that God has painstakingly prepared the human family for the reception of larger doses of revelation. "When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son" (Gal. 4:4). The Greeks and Romans were used of God to prepare the soil for the implanting of the gospel of Christ. Earlier generations had not been ready for such a glorious manifestation of God. Even Adam and Eve needed the Christ because of their sin, and it makes an interesting theological question as to why God did not then and there send his Son to die for our first parents. It was not that Adam and Eve had less need of the Christ than ourselves, but that it was God's will to reveal himself in a way consistent with man's own gradual maturation in society.

Man had to be equipped for such a wonderful revelation as the Christ. He could not yet bear it, and so God dealt with him only fragmentarily "in many parts and in many ways." Perhaps we should nor say *only* fragmentarily, as if to suggest an inadequate revelation, for we believe that God has always provided man with as much of himself as man could bear. This is the point in our theme of the quest of God, that God has indeed continually pursued the heart and mind of man, only in part when that was all man could absorb, but in whole when history had made man ready.

The prophet Isaiah deals with this principle as he describes the difficulty God has in teaching man his will: “It is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little (Isa. 28:10).

And this is what Hebrews 1 says to us. In preparing the world for something far greater, God revealed himself to man in installments—”in many parts and in many ways”—here a little there a little.” The glorious thing about this is that God’s love is so abundant that he was willing to add line to line and precept to precept when this is all that man could bear, and yet to give himself completely in his Son when the world had been made ready.

Abraham was called “the friend of God” and “the father of the faithful,” and yet his knowledge of God was shallow in comparison to that of Isaiah. God had added many lines and precepts between Abraham and Isaiah. And yet Abraham was probably as knowledge-able of God as one could be in his time. His father Terah almost certainly believed in the one God before him, and it may be that God had instructed Terah to sojourn to the promised land long before he gave Abraham such instructions. At least Terah left Ur of the Chaldeans, fully intending to go to Canaan, but for some reason stopped in Haran. His faith in God may not have been strong enough to break his ties with Semitic culture and move out into a new world. later when Abraham was an old man God commanded him to make the journey, and he did.

It takes time even for heaven to cultivate one who is to be the father of the faithful. Surely faith in God reaches well back into Semitic culture, and it took several generations to produce an Abraham. It took many more to produce an Isaiah.

And culture differs from culture, with God assigning one task to one nation and another task to another nation, in realizing his purposes for man. The Semites gave us Abraham who gave us the Jews, and it was the task of the Jews to preserve a monotheistic faith and to create the context for the entrance of the Christ into history. Other cultures were busy fulfilling other purposes of God. Zoroaster was at work in Persia building an ethic that was to influence much of the world. The Caesars in Rome contributed law and order, and they made ready an empire with ships, highways, and harbors, all conducive to a spread of the gospel. The wise men of Greece wrought out ideas and a language that were important vehicles for Christian thought.

We may suppose, therefore, that the prophets to whom God spoke “in many parts and in many ways” were of many cultures: Socrates as well as Moses; Zoroaster as well as Noah; Seneca as well as Micah. One nation built a culture that gave us the virgin Mary and the infant Christ. Another fashioned a language suitable for the dissemination of the gospel. The finger of God was at work among all the nations, pointing to a coming world ruler, and all their prophets spoke of him in one way or another.

The scriptures indicate that the revelation given to one age sets the stage for further revelation later on. 1 Peter 1:1012 informs us that:

"It was concerning this salvation that the prophets made careful search and investigation; and they prophesied about this gift that God would give you. They tried to find out when the time would be and how it would come; for the Spirit of Christ in them pointed to this time in predicting the sufferings that Christ would have to endure, and the glory that would follow. God revealed to these prophets that their work was not for their own benefit, but for yours, as they spoke about the truths which you have now heard. The messengers of the Good News, who spoke by the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, told you these truths. These are truths which even the angels would like to understand."

This describes our place in history as so privileged that even angels cannot understand what has been revealed to us, and that our perception of God's plan is clearer than that of the prophets who first spoke of these times.

Such assurance led to these words in 2 Pet. 1:19: "So we are even more confident of the message proclaimed by the prophets. You will do well to pay attention to it, for it is like a lamp shining in a dark place, until the Day dawns and the light of the morning star shines in your heart."

This passage well illustrates the fragmentary character of God's revelation of himself. The light of the lamp as reflected by prophecy points to the glorious illumination that shall be ours when the Lord comes. The light held aloft by the prophets were like candles in the darkness, weak and dim in the dark midnight of the sin of the ancient world, but significant light nonetheless in that it made possible a vision of the coming Christ, however obscure it may have been.

The basic idea of all that we are saying is that Jesus Christ alone brings to men the full revelation of God. All else is fragmentary, and even the fragmentary points to the fulness of Christ.

As magnificent as the prophets were, they were still but a lamp in comparison to the light of the World, and so their message had to be presented in a way suitable to the limitations of the times. It is interesting how a prophet came to be associated with a single idea. With Amos it was the demand for social justice. He told the people: "You have turned justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood." He was angered by their false weights, their neglect of the poor, and by their extortion of the needy. They even turned the Sabbath into a day of profiteering, and fathers and their sons were sleeping with the same women. It was an age that needed Amos. It took one like him to cry out: "Woe to those who are at ease in Zion!" But this idea of moral purity, so important to the preservation of Israel, was but one *aspect* in the prophetic preparation for the coming Messiah.

Isaiah's conception of the holiness of God was another necessary fragment. Israel could never have fully appreciated Amos' picture of sin apart from Isaiah's description of holiness. Isaiah himself could not discern the immensity of his own sinfulness until he confronted God's holiness. "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts! (Isa. 6:5). Isaiah was able to add an important line and precept to Amos' cry of judgment against injustice, for he told the people: "The Lord of hosts, him you shall regard as holy; let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." (8:13)

It was Hosea who saw the forgiving love of God, as no other prophet did, due in part to his own bitter experiences with a prostitute wife. It was a different aspect of God's revelation when Hosea so dramatically pictured the love God has for his people: "The Lord said to me, 'Go again, love a woman who is beloved of a paramour and is an adulteress; even as the Lord loves the people of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins." (Hosea 3:1)

Ezekiel is still different in emphasis. He added transcendence to the idea of God's holiness, for he saw God's holiness in a restored temple and a New Jerusalem. To him God is the Lord of history and is forever fulfilling his purposes in human events, some of which he motivates by apocalyptic interference. And being priest as well as prophet he ties fragments together and joins precept to precept more than any of the prophets.

But no prophet grasped the whole of truth. Each one, drawing from his own experiences and from the "parts" that God gave him, provided the people with precious fragments of God's revelation. But with Jesus it was different. He was not a mere fragment or only part of truth. He was the whole truth. And so it could be said for the first time in history: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." Only the Light of the World could overcome the darkness that had so long imprisoned man.

And so the apostle says of him: "Christ is the visible likeness of the invisible God. He is the firstborn Son, superior to all created things" (Col. 1:15). Paul goes on to say that it was by him and for him that God created everything. "He existed before all things, and in union with him all things have their proper place."

This is the Christ that John saw while banished on the island of Patmos, which gives testimony to the magnificence of God's revelation in his Son. John says that he saw a being who looked like a man, and he is indeed *a man*, as fully human as any of us. And yet the glorious description that follows there in Rev. 1 shows that the Christ is much more than man. He is priest, king and prophet. He is the purity of God himself. He is both judge and lawgiver. No wonder Paul could exclaim: "Christ is all, Christ is in all!"

Thus we see that by fragmentary revelation—here a little and there a little—God pursued man's heart and mind, giving himself as much to man as man could bear. But everything pointed to the Christ, who is the fulness of all God's expectation. So

fragmentariness is no longer a point. The Christ is the perfect revelation of God. In giving Christ there is nothing left for God to do, and there is nothing further to reveal.

Christ is therefore the answer, in one way or another, to every problem of man. Whether it be divisions within the church, racial discord, or international warfare, the Prince of Peace is the answer. Appropriating his peace to our weighty problems is no simple matter, to be sure, but we must believe that God has provided through Christ all that is necessary for man's well-being. Spiritual wisdom must therefore become man's chief concern.—*the Ed.*

Say rather, beloved Agathon, that you cannot refute the truth, for Socrates is easily refuted.—*Socrates*

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I'M NOT LEAVING

By the contingency of birth I grew up in the Church of Christ. I was immersed at the hands of one of the old-timers and was schooled in not just one but two Church of Christ colleges. My teachers had long since been among the most eminent of the brotherhood, including such stalwarts as N. B. Hardeman, H. Leo Boles, L. L. Brigance, C. H. Roberson, and James F. Cox. Some of my teachers supposed that I too might gain some eminence among our people. It certainly was not predicted that I would one day walk out and leave the Church of Christ to go its own way.

In these days when far too many *are* walking out for all sorts of reasons, I wish to go on record again and say that I'm not leaving—despite the gentle hints to the effect that I might as well. I may charge our people for what I believe to be serious shortcomings, but this is because I love them. I want to help make our people more Christian, more mature, more in touch with the Christian world, more concerned for ecumenicity, and more aware of the human predicament. I cannot do this as well by joining the Baptists or Methodists, and besides I could not conscientiously take such a step anyhow. I am staying where God put me by birth, believing that he wants me to serve where I found myself. But I stay also because of conviction. Problems are not usually solved by running off, and this is why I urge would-be defectors to stay put and work for wholeness where they are. If the Church of Christ is so bad that one is tempted to leave, then it needs the help of those who would walk out.

My efforts for renewal and reform may cause me to be loved less, if loved at all. But it is more important that I love than that I be loved. What I *want* for our people is more important than what I actually accomplish. David did not get to build the temple, but God blessed him because it was in his heart to do so. I love the Church of Christ, and there isn't much the brethren can do about that. That I believe it has become another party within Christendom does not dampen my hope for its potential for Christian witness and unity.

If one labors for oneness and brotherhood these days, it almost has to be within the framework of some party, for that is all there is. Within all parties there are many who are praying and working for better conditions. Such ones should remain where circumstance has placed them, so long as they can believe that this is God's will for them, and there work constructively for renewal through recovery.

This is why the present unity movement will not end in another sect. We urge people *not* to become factious nor troublesome, but to be peacemakers, remaining where they are and exercise diligence to preserve the unity of the Spirit. We are not forming a party. No one is urged to join us, for there is nothing to join-unless indeed it be "the fellowship of the concerned ones" that labors only to build up and not to divide. Part of the problem here, insofar as the Church of Christ folk are concerned, is that we feel this way about Baptists and Christian Church brethren also. We do not think they should leave where they are and join the Church of Christ. Rather they should join themselves to the Lord more devotedly and work where they are.

Surely one may have to leave a communion and go to another. It does happen and sometime should. That would include their leaving the Church of Christ and going elsewhere. Yet we would urge as a general rule of Christian maturity for one to stay where he is and help those he best knows and who best know him. One certainly does not escape sectarianism by running from one denomination to another.

Anyhow I'm staying. Brethren in high places, and low places too, may not want me on their lectureships or in their pulpits, and I may for all practical purposes be disinherited by many. But I can write and such brethren will read, God bless them. And after 16 years as an editor I can testify to a lot of change in attitude. Now there is more encouragement that I continue my efforts. Many of the younger ministers assure me that a better day is dawning. We are pleased to be alive in these exciting times and to help make history. So I look forward to 1969.—*the Editor*

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God and Culture . . .

LESSONS FROM HISTORY

Most of us have heard of Will Durant and his wife Ariel, the popular historians, and some of us have read from their voluminous (10 volumes) *The Story of Civilization.* Few of us, however, may realize that Mr. Durant was 81 when he finished the last volume on "Rousseau and Revolution", and that it won him a Pulitzer Prize. That within itself is a lesson from a historian, if not from history. Too many of us sell ourselves short as we grow older.

But Mr. Durant and his wife were not content to produce a prizewinning volume in the sunset of life, for they have now written what they choose to call *The Lessons of History.* We are not handling this book and are not trying to sell it, but a reference to it may be appropriate in view of our own idea as to what a Christian philosophy of history should be. That is to say that a Christian should most certainly have a philosophy of history, and that he should believe that God teaches lessons in history. He is the God of history and he is a history-making God.

The Christian may gain deep insights into the meaning of history in reading the Durants. This book is their summarizing essay of all their historical research. It is the essence of what history has to say to man, as they see it, and they manage to pack 40 years of historical studies in a concluding statement of around a hundred pages. It is suggestive of how God speaks to man through the record of man's own civilization. If there are lessons to be learned from history, the Christian believes that God himself is the teacher.

The Durants conclude from their studies that no society has ever managed to build a moral culture without the aid of religion. In saying this he also recognizes the role of sin in the story of man, that sin is as old as history itself.

They do not accept the old adage that history repeats itself. Rather they insist that there is no certainty that the future will repeat the past, and that every year is its own adventure. This sounds like the way a Christian should talk about life. They also contend civilization is not something that a culture inherits, for it must be learned and earned by each generation anew.

The Durants do not see in history a reflection of a glorious past, nor does a knowledge of the past cause them to long for "the good old days." As they observe crime in our time, student demonstrations, race riots, and all the rest, they conclude that "The situation is normal." This may sound strange coming from historians, but so it is, and the lesson is important. *Whatever is happening, however good or evil it may appear, history teaches us that the situation is normal.*

It reminds us of Dickens' opening lines in *A Tale of Two Cities:* "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times."

History does not beckon us to long for the good old days, but to work for the good new days. As the Durants put it: “In recorded history we find so many instances of goodness, even of nobility, that we can forgive, though not forget, the sins. The gifts of charity have almost equaled the cruelties of battlefields and jails.”

As important as any of history’s lessons is its reflection of human nature. In its pages man can see what manner of creature he is. “Known history shows little alteration in the conduct of mankind,” say the Durants. “The Greeks of Plato’s time behave very much like the French of modern centuries; and the Romans behaved like the English.” In history man can see both his folly and his glory; it is both a chamber of horrors and a celestial city. Yet history bears witness to regeneration. It proves that man can change from evil to good.

Besides all this the Durants see in history what the Bible calls “a great cloud of witnesses.” To them history is “a spacious country of the mind, wherein a thousand saints, statesmen, inventors, scientists, poets, artists, musicians, lovers and philosophers still live and speak, teach and crave andsing.

History is alive and it speaks with a thousand voices. God is its author and he stands in its shadows.—*the Ed.*

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ARE THERE MODES OF BAPTISM?

ROBERT MEYERS

Any Church of Christ evangelist worth his salt has a ready answer to that question. And like most ready answers, his is half wrong. We can best see that if we read a typical treatment of the theme which arrived on my desk the other day in the form of a church bulletin. Under a resolutely firm title which read *Baptism Has No ‘Modes’,* the author said these partial truths:

“Sometimes people say that immersion is a ‘mode’ or ‘manner’ of baptism. But it is not possible to express way, mode, or manner of a specific verb by use of another verb. To do that we must use an adverb. If I should say, ‘I baptized a man hurriedly, I use the adverb ‘hurriedly’ to express the mode ar manner of baptizing. To say, ‘I baptized a man by sprinkling him’, would be parallel to saying, ‘I walk to town by riding’.

“Sprinkling is not a mode of baptism, any more than riding is a mode of walking. Many honest souls have been sprinkled, or had water poured on them thinking this was a ‘mode’ or ‘manner’ of baptism. This is one of the subtle deceits by which the devil ‘steals the word of God from the heart of man’.”

These statements are true so long as one is dealing only with a Greek verb *(baptizo)* or noun *(baptismos)* and their meanings in the time of Christ. But the statements are egregiously in error when they fail to recognize the fact that words change their meanings. When the average man on the street says that immersion is a "mode" of baptism, he is perfectly correct insofar as "baptism" is an English word.

He is correct because this is how the majority of persons use the word "baptism" today, and because the English dictionaries reflect that usage. Baptism is defined in the Standard *College* Dictionary as "Any religious ablution signifying a purification or consecration." This fine desk dictionary gives the Greek meaning of baptismos as immersion, but makes no attempt to limit the modern English meaning of the word to that mode. The Random House Dictionary (unabridged) calls baptism "a ceremonial immersion in water, or application of water, as an initiatory rite or sacrament of the Christian church."

To accuse honest, decent people of carelessness or gullibility because they are not Greek scholars is unworthy of us. It is perfectly all right to explain to them that the *original* meaning was different, but we ought to understand that a ward's original meaning is by no means its only meaning and that, in fact, its original meaning sometimes vanishes utterly.

The word *queen* once meant *harlot*, the word *prevent* once meant *to go before*, the word *let* once meant to *hinder*, and the word *knave* once meant simply *boy* rather than *villain.* We may argue until we are blue in the face that the meanings of these words should never have changed, but they have changed, and people now use them only in their modern sense.

The word "baptism" is not a translation at all, but a transliteration. It provides the English letter equivalents of the Greek word. Properly translated, in terms of the meaning of the original, it would be "immersed" or same equivalent term.

But the transliteration has come to mean something other than immersion. It now means, in English, any kind of watery washing used as a rite or sacrament in the Christian communities. Any man, therefore, who says that immersion is a "mode of baptism" is perfectly correct in terms of modern usage and it is both ignorant and rude to say that he is not. He no more understands that "baptism" once meant immersion only than he understands that *bowels* once meant *compassion*, or that *reins* once meant *kidneys.* He is neither a knave or a fool for not knowing these things.

What he needs to be told is that there are in fact two words he may want to consider, ane Greek, one English. Perhaps, if we are skillful, we can convince him not only that the Greek word once meant immersion and only that, but that this is the only correct way of handling that ceremony to this very hour. But let us not tell him that "baptism" does not

include sprinkling and pouring, because it is an English word and that is exactly what it now includes. We shall not lose any ground by being charitable rather than arrogant.—*Riverside Church of Christ, Wichita, Kan.*

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WHAT MAKES A THING WRONG?

CURTIS LYDIC

One of our failings is the proneness to oversimplify. We draw clear lines and reduce things to black and white. We have approached the idea of morality from a legalistic point of view, and in so doing we have robbed the idea of much of its inherent power for good. In fact, such absolutism in the interpretation of responsibility can actually incite resistance, especially in the young.

Behind every ordinance of God there is an underlying intention. It is constructive, and has its genuine appeal far the heart of man. When the intent of law is ignored the ordinance becomes a destructive instrument. When the spirit of law is given primary consideration, the law is like a physical regimen prescribed by a physician, wholesome and able to build up.

Considered apart from the underlying intent, the law may be treated as absolute; considered in view of that intent, the law is a relative thing, subject to time and circumstance. The intent of the law is simple, but the circumstantial application of it may be quite complicated.

The principle of morality, as such, is fairly simple. It is bound up very tightly with the idea of love. “He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law,” says Paul, and he is referring to the “moral code” of the Decalogue. He who loves his neighbor is a moral person. The essence of morality is a sense of responsibility to one’s fellow. We are gravely mistaken in restricting our definition of morality to good or bad sex conduct. We would do well to give careful consideration to the broader matter of morality. Now, I will grant that there are many lessons given about right and wrong behavior, but isn’t it true that they mostly just say what behavior is right and what is wrong, based on the “Thou shalts” and “Thou shalt nots” of the Bible? When I suggest more lessons on morality, I am suggesting that they attempt to relate all behavior to the blessedly constructive spirit behind the law of God.

That which is moral is good far man; it is constructive; it strengthens, secures, and gives peace. That which is immoral is harmful to man; it is destructive; it weakens, threatens, and produces anxiety. If any act is immoral, it is not so *because it is condemned in the word.* It is immoral because it is destructive, and the word condemns it *because it is*

destructive. Examine any act which is labeled sin in the Bible, and you will find that it is inherently destructive or injurious, such as "Thou shalt not covet." To have is not inherently destructive, but to covet is. To eat is to sustain the body, but to be gluttonous is to hurt one's self, both body and mind. Sexual intercourse, ordained by God, is good; but adultery and fornication and incest are condemned. Why? Because circumstantial factors render them viciously destructive.

In our teaching on certain behavior (dancing, petting, gambling, drinking, smoking, etc.) it is foolish for us to pretend that circumstances have nothing to do with it. They have a great deal to do with it. Paul says, "All things are lawful, but not all things are expedient." And, "There is nothing unclean in itself." We do nothing which we have not God-given capacity to do, and I suppose that there are few things which may not be right (nondestructive) under some circumstances.

Aside from his responsibility directly to God, all the responsibility of a Christian is *moral* responsibility. Even things which may seem to affect only himself will indirectly affect others. Evil thoughts, of which no other human may be aware, are destructive because they will make their host an evil person. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." One can see the beneficience of love, on the other hand, in that love casts out every harmful thing just as it casts out fear. Love is the remedy for sin; love is the root and foundation of Christian morality.—*Southeastern Christian College, Winchester, Ky.*

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CRITICISM WHICH SAVES

HARRY MOORE

Criticism, like surgery, is always painful, sometimes dangerous, but often necessary. We are hearing some pointed criticisms of our attitudes in the Church of Christ, and most of these criticisms are arising from our own people. One says that we emphasize the wrong things: the formal and institutional rather than the personal. Another says we are legalistic: we treat Christianity as a system of works, whereby a person achieves his salvation. Another says we do wrong to draw factional lines over such things as the use of mechanical instruments of music in public worship. And still others say that we are too intolerant, that we oversimplify complex issues, that we are self-righteous.

These criticisms are widespread and insistent and we aren't sure how we should regard them. Sometimes they seem irreverent, when they so boldly attack established beliefs and attitudes. Sometimes they seem an annoying hindrance to the growth of the church. Other times these criticisms seem anarchic; so much talk about "legalism" and intolerance may lead, we think, to a no-man's land where no certain guiding truth can be found. But then

there are times when the criticism seems both valid and necessary, like a stirring breeze in a parched land. It may seem like thunder and lightning, but it brings purging and refreshing showers. The church is somehow more vital, more relevant, more Christian for the criticism.

Those who criticize must be sure that their criticisms have positive goals, and are not merely negative. Those who are criticized must realize that criticism is needed and that it can be ultimately wholesome.

The Church of Christ is made up of human beings, and for all our noble aims we are not perfect either in knowledge or in practice. It is no more irreverent against the Head of the church to criticize its members than it is irreverent against the Creator of the human body to give a dose of penicillin or to remove an inflamed appendix.

And in the Church of Christ today we do have some infections and some malignancies. In the matter of values, for example, we have allowed an overemphasis on formal congregational practice, as men have always unduly stressed the outward and public expressions of religion. In our efforts to restore the apostolic order described in the New Testament, we have become too absorbed with determining with exactness what that order is. We have rallied sects around specific congregational policies—on music, on mission work, on order in public assemblies. We have categorized brethren and congregations according to their position on certain issues. We have predicted salvation on being right about what constitutes the apostolic order of the church.

Our wrong here is not in respecting the New Testament scriptures or in trying to be guided by them in congregational practice, for we are generally agreed that in some way the scriptures afford precedents and guidelines for Christians in all ages. The wrong is in subordinating one's loyalty to Jesus Christ to one's allegiance to the "right" order of things, which is like eating the shucks and burying the corn. Christ is the Savior: His death and His resurrection are central. This is the Good'

News. To trust Christ as Savior and to commit everything to Him is the essence of being a Christian. This personal faith opens the gateway to rich spiritual gifts. It prompts repentance and gives baptism its meaning as a Christ-centered expression of trust and commitment. It opens one's life to the working of God's Spirit, and hence to peace, hope, joy, and power to overcome sin. This personal faith in Christ must be the center from which other matters—such as how to observe the Lord's supper or do mission work—take their relevance and importance. Our overemphasis on "issues" has made us spirited partisans, but it has often left us cold and fearful Christians. We must give thought to what being a Christian really means, to what the real issues are. The issues must be seen in the total Christian perspective.

But there is another angle from which we are open to criticism: not only in *what* we emphasize, but also in *how* we emphasize it. In our zeal to promote a respect for the scriptures—a worthy aim—we have made salvation a system of works rather than personal faith in Jesus Christ; whereas Paul showed plainly that he sought not a righteousness achieved by works, but "that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. 3:9) . We have approached the New Testament more or less as a legal document containing a more or less abstract, absolute, and detailed plan for the organization and work of the church; we have failed to see it as an inspired record of concrete, specific, Spirit-guided communities meeting specific concrete circumstances with principles which have timeless relevance for churches in all ages, though not always in clear-cut ways. And we have made salvation to depend on our discovering and applying this plan of church order; in fact, we have denied that without all the details of the plan a group can have the "identity" of a church of Christ at all.

Hence, we are rightly criticized as being overly legalistic. Our neat formulas for "the plan of salvation" and for "the worship," where the scriptures have no such formulas, reflect our legal bent. Our talk of the church as a structure we build rather than a family we are born into further reflects it. And our insecurity about our own salvation plainly—and tragically—reflects it. We do well to teach a close adherence to the apostolic order, and we do well to emphasize the need for obedience to God's will; but it is wrong to say that only those who reproduce the apostolic order will be saved. We must approach God more as a child and less as a client. Our assemblies should be more like the family circle and less like the courtroom.

While criticism is needed among us, it can be given wrongly. A careless surgeon can destroy the life he seeks to save. Simple protest may be negative, impulsive, vaguely defined, and even selfish. Criticism that saves must be positive. Our talk about legalism, for example, can be meaningless cant—a false badge of maturity and progressiveness—if behind it is not the thought-out alternative to legalism. Or worse still, a purely negative protest against legalism can become a protest against all authority, even God's. It can lead the undiscriminating to believe that obeying God is not, after all, very important. The Spirit-guided life is not more convenient—but rather more self-involving, more God-trusting, more Christ-glorifying, and more richly rewarding—than the life of law and works. Our protest of overemphasizing "issues" can lead to a neglect of the issues. In our criticism of intolerance we can drift into that broad sea of relativism where the only significant truth is that there is no significant truth. Somehow we must foster respect for what the scriptures say as well as tolerance toward a brother who differs from us in how the scriptures apply.

Our objection to factionalism must be followed by an affirmation of congregational independence in which every brother respects his own conscience. To cease to label brethren as heretics does not mean that we join them in all they practice; it does mean that we love and respect—and receive—them as brethren.

Harry Moore grew up in the non-class Church of Christ wing, and remains there, working with his home congregation in Alexander City, Ala., near the high school where he teaches. He is a graduate student in English at Auburn. He did one year of advanced study at Rice.

Beware the man who knows the answer before he understands the question.—*C. M, Manasco*

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NEW TRANSLATION, NEW PEOPLE

By R. M. Sinclair

It takes no prophet to predict the impact of new and dynamic Bible translations on a people deeply committed to the Word, but immersed in an old, consecrated, and ecclesiastical translation. One venerable gospel preacher, speaking to a group of young preachers recently, bemoaned the upsurge of interest in modern translations. His fear was that they would make us a new people.

The Church of Christ has been slow in critical study and use even of older translations such as Moffatt and Goodspeed. By 1946 when the Revised Standard Version NT (RSV) appeared, the tide could not be contained. Negative reactions almost amounted to a book burning, and a flood of booklets, tracts, and sermons on why we could nor trust the “new version” appeared. Preachers using it in the pulpit were put on notice. One preacher friend covered his new RSV in black cloth to escape persecution, another sad commentary on a type of Bibliolatry which insists on fine print, India paper, and black morocco! (a holdover no doubt from monastic days).

The flood of interest, only temporarily checked in 1946, is now unleashed. Perhaps the freshest translation to catch the interest of Church of Christ folk is the readable New English Bible NT (NEB). It is about time that we have study Bibles that are printed like modern text books typographically and otherwise, and at modest prices. Perhaps this explains the growing popularity of the NEB. Fortunate for us that help has come from

Phillips, Wuest, Schonfield, Dodd and others. More than half of our "church of Christisms" come from anachronisms which we *read into* the KJV, and as these popular versions grow the doctrinal peculiarities will fade. No wonder the keepers of orthodoxy say, "Hang on to your King James".

It is a strange mentality which can sing "Christian Hymns" (written almost entirely by "non-christians") every Sunday and yet repress the fresh and crisp translations with the charge that theirs is a sectarian work! This all reminds me of Alexander Campbell's comments on a new and rival Bible Society:

> Indeed, I am tired of rival establishments in everything called Christianity. There is too much flesh and too little spirit in these antagonistic establishments. *I wonder that we have not Baptist and Pedobaptist stores and shops, ploughs and penknives, as well as newspapers, Bible Societies, schools and colleges.* (emph. mine RMS)

The KJV is an ecclesiastical translation made for the King of England, who was the head of the Church of England. *Most translations are ecclesiastical*, even the American Revised and the New American Revised. If there is any doubt that the KJV is ecclesiastical, read Alexander Campbell's comments on his reprinting of the King's original instructions to his translators, one of which is: "The old ecclesiastical words to be kept; as the word *church,* not to be translated *congregation,* etc."

Campbell also goes on to point *out* that final *etc.* of the King obviously included other *old, consecrated, and ecclesiastical* words such as *baptism* (strange isn't it how we have to let all our people know about the Greek for this last word, while we are silent about church, hell, soul, and a dozen others). Tyndale calls all these ecclesiastical words, *juggling terms,* which happens to be a very good definition. As Campbell further points out this use of ecclesiastical language smacks of kingcraft or priestcraft or both. Unfortunately, even in the Church of Christ, *priestcraft* is with us yet. We juggle the same old, ecclesiastical, consecrated words to sustain a doctrinal system of our own making.

If any doubts this, let it be observed who it is that "preserves the doctrinal purity of the Lord's Church", and with which version. Almost without exception the preachers are the ones who decide whom to "fellowship" or not, whom to invite to lectureships, and who will write for the papers. They also write out the bulls of excommunication and sit in judgment on other congregations and fellow preachers. What would Campbell have said had he seen our brand of priestcraft! The new translations simply do not lend themselves to our "marking" and "disfellowshipping" manias. Look up all our key verses used to "disfellowship", and you'll see how the fresh renditions fail to sustain our factious practices.

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FOR 1969: RENEWAL THROUGH RECOVERY

One of the terms emanating from current efforts for reform is “Renewal through Recovery”, a term that may have equal force in its converse, “Recovery through Renewal. While *Restoration Movement* still appeals to us, it is continually in need of definition. Such words as *renewal* and *recovery* help to do this. *Renewal* is the essence of restoration, and *recovery* indicates the nature of movement. Quite obviously any idea of restoration that does not *move* is of little value, and anything that moves without valid principles is in vain.

We thus have our theme for 1969: *renewal through recovery.* We intend that this be a study of the basic principles of our movement, both from its inception with the Campbells and its earlier background. There have, of course, been many restoration movements. But we wish to look at our own in particular to see if it does, indeed, have the seeds for renewal through recovery or recovery through renewal.

We shall examine two important documents by the Campbells as the prime sources. One is the *Declaration and Address* by Thomas Campbell, the other “Synopsis of Reform” by Alexander Campbell. The first sets forth some of the broad principles that gave impetus to the movement, principles that should be reevaluated in each generation. The second lists many of the specific goals of reform, a kind of roll call of essentials.

Such shall be our concern all year long. We trust you will read along with us and share with us your reactions.

Equally important is your willingness to encourage others to read what we are saying. We can double or triple our readership for 1969 with only moderate help from those already taking the paper. We would urge you to tell your friends about our efforts. We will supply you with sample copies for this purpose upon request, or if you will send us their names, we will be glad to contact them.

Some of our readers receive bundles each month. For example, you can receive a bundle of 6 papers each month for only 3.00 a year, or 12 each month but for 6.00 a year. These can be passed or mailed to interested parties. Or you can send us a list of 6 names and we will send them the journal for a year for only 3.00. If you could only have some idea of how many have been greatly helped with no more effort than this, you would be more inclined to do it. Reading material remains about the best way to reach the heart and mind of man. The person who would never listen to you personally *just might* give *Restoration Review* a curious and deliberative perusal.

We are saying that the effort from year to year with this journal is expensive and arduous. So we want as many as possible to benefit. In this respect you, our readers, are our epistles. It will be mainly through you that others will come to know about us.

We plan again in 1969 to issue the volume in permanent binding, with introduction and table and contents, with the title of *Renewal Through Recovery.* It will match the three volumes preceding it. These are *Resources of Power* (1966), *Things That Matter Most* (1967) and *The Quest of God* (1968). The 1968 volume will be available in a few weeks. These may be ordered for 3.00 each.

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RESPONSE FROM READERS

For several years I felt that the Church of Christ was dwelling on unimportant, mechanical matters to the exclusion of more important spiritual things. Unfortunately, in my reaction I dwelt on my own unimportant matters and was as uncharitable to those in the Church of Christ as I thought they were to Catholics. The *Restoration Review* has shown me that love is compatible with differences of opinion and even differences of doctrine. It has also helped me to gain a greater perspective of what His church is all about.—*Pennsylvania*

May I suggest you change the name of your journal from *Restoration Review* to "Critics Review." Of all mortals a critic is the silliest for inuring himself to examine all things, whether they are of consequence or not. He never looks upon anything but with the design of passing sentence upon it, by means of which he is never a companion but always a censor.—*Illinois*

I am heartened by the influence you and other spokesmen are exerting on the brotherhood of believers, causing them to awaken and reexamine and reevaluate some of our traditional beliefs which have kept us shackled for so many years to some of the most narrow and arrogant attitudes known to any.—*Oregon*

The tradition bound, self-righteous souls, like myself, are seeing the light all across the country.—*Ohio*

To a certain extent over the months I have come to feel much as you do about the church for which I have preached now for over fifteen years.—*Nevada*

What a marvelous piece of work your last issue was! Especially the article on "Great Religions." This is a subject that has long concerned me, perhaps because my narrow raising clashed with my common sense in interpreting what God's attitude must be toward the fellow who could not help where he was born.—*Texas*

I must confess that I read the first issue (for me) with mixed emotions and maybe that is the trouble right there. I mean I read it with emotion rather than with cool logic. I am not about to say that I agreed with everything you wrote, or even with the way it was written,

but neither was I looking for a place to pick a quarrel. All of my brethren are entitled to a hearing, as I hope I too am entitled.—*Canada*

In the September issue one reader from Georgia said in effect that he was fearful of stating his mind for he was "dependent on the above letterhead for a living." This was my problem for a long time. Now I depend on God, to whom I said I gave myself. It is a wonderful feeling to be free in Christ. I highly recommend it to the brethren of any persuasion or party.—*California*

(An indirect message by way of a letter to someone else) Tell Leroy Garrett that intellectualism, while having certain benefits, is a poor substitute for one's yielding to and being filled with the Spirit of the Living God.—*California*

I can't say that I agree with all that you publish, but neither can I say that for any other publication. I do find it refreshing and stimulating to read something beside the party line for a change.—*Florida*

It is encouraging to read a publication which is so forthright and edited by one still identified with the Church of Christ Church. . . I am more and more perturbed by the growing division between the educated and less educated.—*New Mexico.*

Let me say I enjoy the magazine and support your stand for the oneness of those in Christ. In Britain the Churches have been sadly divided in recent years over the use of individual cups by Churches associated with 'Herald of Truth' group. For this reason I find it refreshing to read of the attempts in the U. S. to unite the Church rather than divide it.—*Scotland*

We have really used our copies of *Restoration Review.* (My husband) teaches the Sunday morning high school seniors class, and he takes many of the ideas presented in *Restoration Review* and throws them out for these kids to chew on. He has a very lively, unorthodox class!—*Texas*

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BOOK NOTES

War and Conscience in America is written to help us think more searchingly about the agonizing problems raised by war, and about the moral issues confronting young men who face military service. The chapter on the conscientious objector is especially informative. Its treatment of the changing nature of war is also provocative. Only 1.65 in paperback.

Voices of Action is edited by Jimmie Lovell, editor of *Action* magazine, who speaks of the several writers of the volume as "my boys," referring we suppose to the closeness existing between him and them. They include such names as Jimmy Allen, Bill Banowsky, Pat Boone, Wes Reagan, Don McGaughey, John Allen Chalk, and other young princes of the church. Their sermons and essays drawn from meaningful experiences in Christian service—voices of action! Don McGaughey talks about "Christ and the Disinherited," and he takes the reader to inner-city and describes the controversial "House of the Carpenter." Prentice Meador in his "The Gospel According to Love" contends that one starts living when he starts loving (might it also be said the other way?). Pat Boone writes only briefly, but he writes well, and you will appreciate his point that Jesus came to show that a man wins by losing. Let us say that in this volume one has come of the younger and more responsible voices within Churches of Christ. The "New Look" is here too. It is too highly priced at 3.95, but to show how much we love Jimmie Lovell and his publisher we will give a free subscription to *Restoration Review*, or a renewal, to everyone who buys this volume. And it is indeed worth your reading.

The New Testament: An Introduction for the General Reader by Oscar Cullmann is available at only 1.95 in paperback, and we urge you to add this informative book to your library. It gives a history of the NT text and an introduction to the various books, showing how they became a part of the Bible, how they came to be written, etc.

The New Testament and Criticism by George Eldon Ladd is a similar kind of book, but it goes further in discussing form criticism, historical criticism, and literary criticism, as well as textural criticism. The subjects may be weighty, but the points are clearly set forth and any intelligent Christian can gain much by a careful study. It is 3.9.5.

Voices of Concern by Robert Meyers has taken its place among the controversial publications among Churches of Christ, a category of materials nor nearly as extensive as it should be. We simply have not been as critical of ourselves as we should have been, and we are consequently the weaker for it, But *Voices of Concern* provides some criticism that many believe is vitally needed, both from those who have left us and those who have remained. It is important that they be heard.

This book may soon be our of print, despite the success of its publication. But we are now a maturing people and we are learning to criticize ourselves, so other and more recent critical materials will be coming forth. Yet *Voices of Concern* will go down in our history as an *avant garde* in this area and its significance will grow with the years.

If you plan to own a copy of this provocative volume, we urge you to act now, for only a few hundred copies remain to be sold. The price is 3.50, Collectors will one day pay three times that. Order from us.

This 1968 edition (Volume 10) of *Restoration Review* will be issued in bound volume, entitled "The Quest of God." 200 pages, plus introduction and index, with colorful dust jacket, matching the earlier volumes. Only 3.00. Please place your order now, but you need not pay now.

Resources of Power (1966 bound volume) and *Things That Matter Most* (1967) are now available at 3.00 each,

Let us remind you that you can receive this journal for only $1.00 a year or six names for only $3.00,

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